ever elusive
thirty years of transmediale
2 Feb – 5 Mar 2017
HKW and various venues, Berlin

Film & Video program

The film & video program reflects on the history of the festival through the re-release of video works from transmediale's archive and highlights central aspects of ever elusive*: the material and animist conditions of reality as well as the increasing role of generative computer processes and machine autonomy.*

The first multi-day video program was organized by MedienOperative, founded in West Berlin in 1977 as a center for independent video work and video culture, as part of the 17th International Forum of New Cinema in 1987. On the initiative of Micky Kwella, the VideoFilmFest followed a year later and also took place in connection with the Berlinale. It wasn't until 1990 that the VideoFest presented itself as an independent festival for video art and documentary video. Dates were kept close to those of the Berlinale.

ever elusive reflects on the history of the festival through the re-release of video works from transmediale's archive: Max Almy & Teri Yarbrow's *Utopia*, Kain Karawahn's *Wundbrand*, Doug Porter's *Losing Sleep*, and Sarah Vanagt's *Little Figures*. The presentation of four early (1970–72) experimental films by American computer art pioneer Lillian Schwartz for the opening makes reference to the recurring presence of computer animation during the first decade of the festival and highlights a central aspect of *ever elusive*: the increasing role of machines in the creative process. By the same token, audio-visual abstraction runs through the selection of international historical and contemporary films as much as the documentary view of the material and animistic conditions of a reality that stands in opposition to the alleged dematerialization of the digital world.

The reasoning behind the concept of post-humanism goes beyond the human subject as the sole reference value and aims at an equivalence of all life. Non-human entities, such as animals and plants, are included in a system of mutual dependence and become objects of a longing for communication. Such a relational approach is also due to the realization that fundamentally, nature is technologically mediated—it carries within it the effects of modern economic and social advancement in all its contradictions. However, from precisely the perspective of human interaction, with what Rosi Braidotti describes as a "continuum of self-organizing life-systems," the posthuman turn is based on a departure from the ever-expanding commodification of living material. Against this backdrop, the films of this program address a wide range of social questions and contexts, from the history of industrialization and colonialism to healthcare, land policy, and the urban commons.

The Sprawl (Propaganda About Propaganda), the 2016 feature film debut of Dutch design studio Metahaven, reflects on, for example, the geopolitical implications of the digital network and the role of propaganda in the age of social media. The internet has become a sovereign power without standards, a mega-weapon for the manipulation of information. In our post-truth present it is precisely the openness of the global network that seems to support the emergence of new nationalism and anti-liberal narratives.

The film and video program of *ever elusive* presents decidedly artistic approaches in the handling of analog and digital aesthetics. The conscious overloading of human perception in cinema, as well as references to processes that are far beyond perceptibility and control,

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identifies the autonomy of the machine as an essential aspect of past and future technological development. The films are split between utopian and dystopian scenarios in order to not least affirm resistance to the prevailing power relationships of global capitalism.

With works by

Emanuel Almborg, Max Almy & Teri Yarbrow, Emilien Awada, Ramin Bahrani, Andreas Bunte, Beatrice Gibson, Louis Henderson, Kain Karawahn, Shambhavi Kaul, Rainer Kohlberger, John Latham, Elke Marhöfer, Steven Matheson, Jesse McLean, Metahaven, Doug Porter, Alain Resnais, Constanze Ruhm, Sita Scherer, Maximilian Schmoetzer, Lillian Schwartz, Percy Stow, Caspar Stracke, Lisa Tan, Armin Thalhammer, Sarah Vanagt, Stan Vanderbeek, Dorine van Meel, Ana Vaz, Sun Xun

With 18 participants present during *ever elusive – thirty years of transmediale* (Effective: 30 Jan 2017)

Emanuel Almborg, Emilien Awada, Andreas Bunte, Louis Henderson, Kain Karawahn, Rainer Kohlberger, Elke Marhöfer, Jesse McLean, Dorine van Meel, Metahaven, Doug Porter, Constanze Ruhm, Sita Scherer, Maximilian Schmoetzer, Caspar Stracke, Armin Thalhammer, Susan Schuppli, Lisa Tan